

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An emergency evacuation apparatus (10) for use with an adjustable bed and for removing a bed-ridden person (P) from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, comprising a base tray (11) having ~~at least one~~ three transverse fold lines (12) to allow the base tray (11) to bend as ~~two or more~~ four panels defining a backrest, an intermediate panel and a knee-break, the base tray (11) being adapted to stay on top of the adjustable bed and bend along the ~~at least one~~ transverse fold lines (12) when the profile of the adjustable bed is changed during normal use; and mechanical locking means (20) operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray (11) is able to bend along the transverse fold lines (12) and a locked condition in which the base tray (11) is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines (12) and to provide the base tray (11) with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical locking means ~~is~~ comprises at least one ~~or more~~ rigid locking bolt ~~bolts~~ (20).

3. (Cancelled)

4 3. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ an underside of the base tray (11) is provided with wheels (17), glide members, roller balls or castors to facilitate its movement over the floor.

5 4. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to claim 4 3, wherein the wheels (17), glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted in channels on the underside of the base tray (11).

6 5. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to claim 4 3, ~~or claim 5~~, further comprising u-shaped runners (16) fixed to the underside of the base tray (11) into which the wheels (17), glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted.

7 6. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, further comprising straps (21) secured to the base tray (11) for wrapping around the person (P) in an emergency situation to restrain the person (P).

8 7. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to claim 7 6, wherein the straps (21) are provided with snap-fit couplings which permit ~~them~~ the straps to be connected together to encircle the person (P) prior to tightening ~~them~~ the straps.

9 8. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to claim 7 6 ~~or claim 8~~, wherein the base tray (11) has two longitudinal folds lines (14a, 14b) defining a central panel (15a) for supporting the person (P) and two side panels (15a, 15e) that can be bent out of the plane of the central panel (15a) by the straps (21).

10 9. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the base tray (11) is made of polypropylene.

11 10. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (10) according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 8, wherein the transverse and longitudinal fold lines (12, 14) are hydraulically pressed into the base tray (11).

~~12~~ 11. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, further comprising carrying handles secured to the sides of the base tray ~~(11)~~.

~~13~~ 12. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~, further comprising at least one strip ~~or more strips~~ of foam ~~(18)~~ fixed to ~~the~~ an underside of the base tray ~~(11)~~.

~~14~~ 13. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A combination of an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels ~~(2)~~ that can bend relative to each other and an emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ for removing a bed-ridden person from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, the emergency evacuation apparatus comprising a base tray ~~(11)~~ having a plurality of transverse fold lines ~~(12)~~ to allow the base tray ~~(11)~~ to bend as a plurality of panels ~~(13)~~; and mechanical locking means ~~(20)~~ operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray ~~(11)~~ is able to bend along the transverse fold lines ~~(12)~~ in register with the underlying panels ~~(2)~~ of the adjustable bed and a locked condition in which the base tray ~~(11)~~ is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines ~~(12)~~ and to provide the base tray ~~(11)~~ with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.

~~15~~ 14. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The combination of ~~an~~ the adjustable bed and ~~an~~ the emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ according to claim ~~14~~ 13, wherein the base tray ~~(11)~~ and the adjustable bed have the same number of panels ~~(2, 13)~~.

~~16~~ 15. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The combination of ~~an~~ the adjustable bed and ~~an~~ the emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ according to claim ~~13~~ 14 ~~or claim 15~~, wherein the base tray ~~(11)~~ has substantially the same width as the adjustable bed.

~~17~~ 16. (Currently Amended) ~~A combination of an adjustable bed and an~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus ~~(10)~~ according to claim ~~65~~ in combination with the

adjustable bed, wherein a tail-board (4) of the adjustable bed includes rollers (5) or fixed projections for engagement with the runners (17) fixed to the underside of the base tray (11) to assist in the removal of the emergency of the emergency evacuation apparatus (10) from the adjustable bed.

18 17. (Currently Amended) A method of evacuating a bed-ridden person from an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels (2) that can bend relative to each other using an emergency evacuation apparatus (10) ~~according to any of claims 1 to 13~~, comprising the steps of:

operating the adjustable bed with ~~the~~ a mechanical locking means (20) in ~~the~~ an unlocked position;

bending ~~so that the~~ panels (13) of ~~the~~ a base tray (11) ~~bend~~ along the transverse fold lines (12) in register with the underlying panels (2) of the adjustable bed until the panels (13) of the base tray (11) lie in the same plane or at a predetermined angle to each other; and

operating the mechanical locking means (20) from the unlocked condition to ~~the~~ a locked condition so that the base tray (11) is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines (12) ~~and to provide~~ providing the base tray (11) with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.